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# Shadowing Issues in Research in Foreign Culture: A Lyon Case

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## Abstract

*This paper contains a review of theoretical assumptions and practical application of the qualitative research technique called shadowing. Paper includes also example of shadowing technique used in researches undertaken in foreign country – France designed as following the educational consultant from French Academie de Lyon, Louis La Roch (all personal data was anonymised). I followed after this consultant for one week in May 2012 collecting the observational data, field notes, casual conversation and interviews. I researched everyday routines and professional rituals of educational consultant who daily travelled or walked from home to his office and from office to inclusive units for children and youth with intellectual disabilities in mainstream schools. I spent in shadowing entire week visiting since morning, Academie de Lyon, schools with inclusive units and for the first time I publish now the results of such methodological and research experience of shadowing. Educational consultant, in Lyon visited daily inclusive units called CLIS, for children with mild disabilities and ULIS for youth with mild disabilities in Lyon and nearby area.*

**Keywords:** Qualitative research, research technique, shadowing, observation, non-participant observation, case report.

## Introduction

The research undertaken with the technique of data collection called shadowing is an original experience while studying the single part of educational system and the conditions of inclusive education abroad. Such research could be a challenge, especially when the educational system is distinct culturally and researcher has relatively poor knowledge of the native language of studied culture. One of such challenge was the idea of a studying particular education system link in France, meant as professional work of educational consultant for young teachers teaching children and youth with mild intellectual disabilities. The second challenge was researching by using field research technique called shadowing.

The idea came about after my first scientific visit in France, Lyon in September of 2010. It was then an opportunity to learn about care centers for children, youth and adults with mild and profound intellectual disabilities. Moreover, I

visited schools of various types (daily, stationary, inclusive) which supported children and young people in situations of mild disabilities. Since then, I started thinking about the education system for pupils with disabilities in France as a place for interesting research. In 2012, I went again to scientific visit to Lyon and I could undertake qualitative researches over a period of one week (20.05-27.05.2012). During this time I realized both: shadowing technique and micro-ethnographic study abroad of inclusive education unit CLIS for children and youth with mild intellectual disabilities.

My key informant in the field was an educational consultant for the young teachers from the Academie de Lyon, Louis La Roch. Research assignments and the technique of mobile observation prompted me now to write a text on the subject and analyze the possibilities and limitations of applying the shadowing technique in the study of selected phenomena. Every day during the research I left the house in the morning and followed all day until late evening after a consultant. I'd been in both: Academie de Lyon, office and workplace of consultant and also in the field and in inclusive units of education in public schools for children and youth with intellectual disabilities. The second area of knowledge was associated with the private life of the key informant. I also observed private and family life of consultant which I learned about after daily office hours. I met the family of L. La Roch and his family life, daily patterns routines and emotional ties as additional components of the study.

The study is an analysis of the theoretical background and methodological possibilities as well as limitations arising while using shadowing technique, carried out in a foreign culture different than Slavic, where I come from. The description of the entire French inclusive education system and the functioning of the units called CLIS-es and ULIS-es will be deeply analyzed in a separate article. During researches in Lyon I asked myself a few problematic issues to think about. For first, if there is possibility to collect scientifically valuable data on conditions of shadowing but without good knowledge of the native language of a given studied culture? Spradley<sup>17-18</sup> wrote that the researcher is learning during his/her stay in the cultural scene. This remark seemed to be logical and clear. What I intend to say is associated rather not with assessment of developing linguistic capabilities of the researcher but with the real possibility to collect the cultural, visual and other data in the context of such linguistic limitations. It also means the implementation the shadowing technique into research led abroad.

I want to add that that my French language ability is at the

level of A1 but the same time I communicate in the English for more than 20 years at the level of C2. So basically I used English language to communicate in France during research. It was realistically difficult position of the researcher but at certain moments was also a comfortable position in the research, especially while getting under the surface of the cultural knowledge or recognizing the family ties problems experienced by family of La Roch. I learned also that condition and limitation as speaking poor French or not speaking at all, in certain shadowing activities, sharpened up my senses on observable phenomena, especially in places where the French people communicated among them in French. In 2012, I was already an experienced field researcher, completed a few qualitative and ethnographic research projects in disability cultures since 1999. However, I learned a lot through this not easy technique called shadowing.

Observation on the move - shadowing became the dominant research technique during the daily field work and analyzing activities of educational consultant in Lyon. I wanted to find an answer to introductory question as: what are the daily professional routines for educational consultant for teachers teaching children, youth with mild intellectual disabilities in French inclusive units?

## Review of Literature

**Stationary Observation Varieties:** Observations are considered to be a tool to collect data. Merriam<sup>15</sup> writes "when it is systematic, when it addresses a specific research question and when it is subjected to the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results". According to Urbaniak-Zajac<sup>20</sup> observation is the most natural way to learn about other people's lives, close to everyday human experience. The author continues that observation is a technique seemingly easy to implement. Angrosino<sup>1</sup> writes that "observation is an act of perception phenomena and recording them for scientific purposes, often using appropriate tools. This wording implies that when we see something, we do it using all senses. Casual observation is often limited to recording visual data, but a good ethnographer should be sensitive to information from all sources." Angrosino<sup>1</sup> continues that ethnographic research (in contrast to the observations carried out in the clinical settings) is carried out in the field under natural conditions. The observer is mainly involved in this, which is the subject of his/her observations.

Bernard<sup>2</sup> writes that there are two big strategies for direct observation of behavior. You can be blatant about it and reactive or you can be unobtrusive and nonreactive. In reactive observation, people know that you are watching them and may play to their audience-you. You can wind up with data about what people want you to see and learn little about what people do when you're not around. In unobtrusive observation, you study people's behavior without their knowing it. This stops people from playing to an audience but it raises tough ethical questions".

Among the levels of participation and position of the observer, Creswell<sup>4</sup> distinguishes "the full participation of where the researcher hides its role as participant observer when the role of the investigator is public. Then a participant as an observer - observer's role is secondary in relation to the role of participant and full of observation - the researcher is observing but not participating". A similar level of observation points Angrosino<sup>1</sup> who considers researcher during the observation as excluded observer who distances himself to the study area. He/she remains unnoticed and invisible. This type is not very popular because of the risk of distortions and ethical problems. Observer - as a participant is another level and position of the researcher. The investigator is familiar, but to the respondents relate solely as a researcher. Third option is participant - as an observer when the researcher integrates with group life and engages in relationships with the studied culture. He/she is not a neutral friend and scholar, yet his actions as a researcher are respected. The forth level of participation in observation is full participation when researcher penetrates completely the study area, sometimes without revealing its action plan. This is called "playing native". Studies of this type are becoming more popular. Sometimes, however, in this type of research can occur ethical problems associated with the excessive involvement of the investigator?

According to Jamielniak<sup>11</sup>, participant observation is a classic and highly appreciated technique in ethnography and other qualitative studies, used to know very different cultural backgrounds - from tribal groups to international companies. This technique is very time-consuming and tiring, but a far better approach of the investigator to the environment. It requires a major commitment to give the desired effect, but also extremely important to maintain a minimum critical distance. The author continues that "the observation of such participating and not only as a researcher separated from the people, but also, as an ordinary man, thinking and sentient life experience with a particular and specific repertoire of ideas and reactions - as an actor in the role of social incoming social interaction. This type of observation is done with insider position which is a member of the community or group".

**Nonparticipant observation:** Kostera<sup>12</sup> writes that using non-participating direct observation approach by the researcher studied communities retains the position of an outsider - "guest" and clearly defines the role and position of the researcher. This kind of observation without participation is implemented in the researches of cultures of the organizations.

Ciesielska et al<sup>3</sup> write that the "guest" role is defined differently by different researchers. Some of the "guests" blend into the background and people in the organization almost forget about them. And the life in the organization takes a normal rhythm. The researcher can freely observe and take notes. The authors suggest yet another role of the

non-participant observer as "nosy but lovable cousin from abroad". This role allows the researcher to ask questions about things that are for an organization culture, professional and are too obvious. According to the authors of this definition of observation, researcher can obtain a lot of tacit knowledge feeling the climate and asking people for explanations. The authors think that even the "melting into the background" in a sense, participating in the life of particular community which the researcher investigates as non-participant also has an impact. The researcher is of a particular gender, age, social position, good looks and behavior. I would add also different culture as determinant influencing the research.

This means, *de facto*, according to the Ciesielska et al<sup>3</sup> that non-participant observation is also set of participation activities albeit very limited. "The researcher may in fact be drawn into participation through various requests for help, pulled into a conversation over coffee and no way to prevent against this." Maintaining a gap at all costs as non-participating observer does not mean you have to act like a pillar of salt. The authors continue that "in a non-participant observation the researcher requires also self-reflection that the researcher analyzed his/her own behavior reactions, thoughts, feelings and how his/her presence can influence the situation".

The non-participant observation is according to Ciesielska et al<sup>3</sup> the study from position of the outsider as "visitor from another planet". Such type of observation is the attempt to change the point of view, way of looking at the world and sharpening the perception without categorization and assessment. The authors write also that non-participant observation is used in a study of well-known facts, environments for example: airports, train stations, exhibition halls. The metaphorical tools for the authors are used during the observations as a "creative surprise, seeing again, nothing is known and obvious, sharpens the perception of anthropological, avoiding typologies categorizations, interpretation and evaluation. Notes are written on an ongoing basis".

Among the pros and cons of taking non-participant observation, the authors point that "you cannot get to know the culture, for e.g. studying the sense of human behavior only by observing it from the outside. The same was pointed out by Spradley<sup>17,18</sup> years ago. The other disadvantage is that the behavior of the researcher differs from the generally accepted in public places and may cause adverse reactions (e.g. the protection officers of the airport or supermarket). As the advantages by the authors indicate that one can get good results from observational studies in a short time, the advantage is also a fresh perspective on reality and that observation of as non-participant is excellent as a supplement to other forms of observation. This opinion I also share. The authors also add that non-participant observation, as well as participating, characterizes a low level of control over the observed situation. To customize the researcher tries

to minimize own influences, not affect the environment and exert minimal pressure. The researcher is often exposed to unpredictable situations easy or difficult to him/her. Non-participant but direct observation is according to the authors, the experience not only intellectual but also sensuous including vision, look, "peeping", listening, hearing and "eavesdropping". Some of these experiences may be ethically questionable in my opinion.

There are limitations while performing the direct observation indicated by the other authors. According to Bertrand<sup>2</sup>, you may be concerned that a strictly observational approach to gathering data about human behavior fails to capture the meaning of data for the actors. This, too, is a legitimate concern". The author cites the well-known example of the Geertz's<sup>9</sup> experiences and remarks. "Observation that a wink can be the result of getting a speck of dust in your eye or a conscious act of conspiracy. And that's just a wink. People can engage in any of thousands of behaviors (skipping a class, wearing a tie, having their navel pierced) for many different reasons. Knowing the meaning of behavior to others is essential to understanding it ourselves".

**What phenomena to observe?** Merriam<sup>15</sup> proposed that a researcher should be aware of the following areas when conducting observations: the physical setting, the participants, conversations, subtle factors and researcher's behavior. The author proposed that "researchers should include information pertaining to their behavior in the setting. Researchers should also include reflective notes (that are indicated as such) within their field notes". I would add from my own research experiences in the qualitative research projects with adults with disability areas that observer should be also sensitive for changing moods and subtle changes in vocabulary or communication style of the key informants with disabilities in the field.

### **Theoretical Assumptions and Definitions of Shadowing:**

McDonalds<sup>13</sup> writes that "shadowing is a research technique which involves a researcher closely following a member of an organization over an extended period of time. When the person being shadowed goes to another department, the researcher follows them. When they have a project meeting or meet with a customer, the researcher sits in. If they have coffee with friends who are colleagues from another site, the researcher goes too. The researchers shadow the target individually from the moment they begin their working day until they leave for home. This can include hours of stationary observation whilst the person being shadowed writes at his or her desk, running between buildings for a series of meetings or attending dinners held for clients. Shadowing activity will be as various and complex as the job of the individual the researcher is investigating. Shadowing can be done over consecutive or non-consecutive days for anything from a single day or shift up to a whole month."

Shadowing activity will be as various and complex as the job of the individual the researcher is investigating. Schein<sup>16</sup> advised to his students as following: “shadow a person you know who agrees to be shadowed; someone as different as possible from you in as many ways as possible. Shadow that person for some hours, reflect over everything that struck you as strange and consider what it tells you about yourself”.

McDonalds<sup>13</sup> continues that “shadowing can be done over consecutive or nonconsecutive days for anything from a single day or shift, up to a whole month. Studies can be focused on a single role (such as new recruit or purchasing manager) in several companies or on a number of roles within the same company. The author suggests that “during the shadowing the researcher will write an almost continuous set of field notes. They will record participants in and times and contents of conversations. They will write down the answers to the questions they ask and as much of the running commentary as is possible. They will note the body language and moods of the person they are shadowing. At the end of the shadowing period the researcher will have a rich, dense and comprehensive data set which gives a detailed, first hand and multidimensional picture of the role, approach, philosophy and tasks of the person being studied. These data can then be analyzed in the same way as any other qualitative data.”

#### **Choosing the Right Informant to follow as Key Issue:**

Wolcott<sup>19</sup> specified a whole set of criteria before choosing a person to follow but in the end he was eager to admit that ‘good fortune’ also played a part in his choice. He was looking for a person who was a full-time, career principal (i.e. without teaching duties and not seeing his job as a step to another job); responsible for only one elementary school; experienced in his job; male (most principals were men, although most teachers were women) and likely to survive a two-year close contact with the researcher without personal hostilities.

**Ethical dilemmas:** Bertrand<sup>2</sup> writes about the ethics of straight observation: finally, you may have some qualms about the ethics of obtrusive observation. It cannot be said too often that every single data collection act in the field has an ethical component and a fieldworker is obliged every single time to think through the ethical implications of data collection acts. Personally, I have less difficulty with the potential ethical problems of obtrusive, reactive observation than I do with any other data collection method including participant observation. In obtrusive observation, people actually *see* you (or a camera) taking down their behavior and they can ask you to stop. Nothing is hidden.

As rightly pointed by Roth,<sup>14</sup> “the ethics in the research cannot be reduced to centrally formulated rules that can be easily adapted to any context. Research ethics should be seen, rather, as an inseparable part of research practice”.

Jamielniak<sup>11</sup> also writes that resolving ethical dilemmas and

doubts can help knowledge of codes of ethics or expand his own reflection. Flick<sup>8</sup> lists the basic rules for fair terms of ethical research. These include: informed consent means that no one should participate in the research, without knowing it and without being able to express refusal. Flick<sup>8</sup> advised also respecting the privacy of subjects and guarantee them full confidentiality (and keep such word). The author continues that “the accuracy of the data and their interpretation should be the guiding principle of research and therefore are not allowed to conscious omissions or manipulation in the course of data collection and its analysis. In the relationship with the candidate most important treatment is subjective. Care should be taken that research in any manner is not detrimental. It should fairly balance the benefits and burdens binding respondents from participating in research.

#### **A Lyon Case**

##### **Shadowing performance in foreign Educational Settings:**

Shadowing as a data collecting technique is next to micro-ethnographic study, I was carrying out the research stay in Lyon, France, between 20.05 to 27.05.2012 at the invitation of Academie de Lyon. By this time I could every day from morning to evening pursue direct observation while following the educational consultant. My place of weekly accommodation was located in Lyon with good accessibility to the Academie de Lyon and key informant. I had an opportunity for observations lasting from the morning to approx. 10:00 pm. During my research stay in Lyon I realized shadowing technique and non-participant direct observations, as well as participant observation. I ran casual conversation and the total of 6 unstructured interviews with the consultant Louis La Roch. I made over 440 photographs from the field.

The advantages lie in the fact that the researcher has redoubled attention and sensory sensitivity, visual attention on the phenomena, appearing in his/her field of vision. This applies to the activity of a key informant, context or actions taken by him. Following closely the informant, researcher listens, she/he decodes the fragments of language. The challenge is certainly time needed for implementation of shadowing which is associated with the negotiation in the field of communication with key informant. In my case, the negotiations were related to the applicability and communicating in English with the French, the Academie de Lyon employees and family of the consultant, because the key informant L. La Roch spoke fluent English.

I noticed during that stay as well as during two my earlier longer visits in France (entire month in 1993, approx. 2 weeks in 2010) that the French people with whom I had contact are reluctant to speak in English, even though they knew the language. Another challenge and limitation was associated with the issue of mobility. I mean that researcher should keep in mind that a key informant, who is being shadowed actually take him/her to places where he/she wants to lead the researcher. This gives the fragmentation of broader knowledge, despite the fact that the researcher

obtains specific social reality shown by the followed informant. I also noticed that shadowing would give more data after more than week of fieldwork, what seems obvious.

I noticed choosing the right person to follow is also important to choose such who have many good connections in the cultural scene. Thank to such key informant, the researcher has extensive access to the field, observational data, events, relationships, ties and emotions. Very admired and respected in own cultural, professional scene key informant helps also to obtain needed consents for the data collection and/or publication in the report. I also venture to say that the affection and admiration of the informant – educational consultant in professional circles had significantly influenced the willingness of other French employees of Academie de Lyon to speak with me and share their knowledge and experiences.

The educational consultant was a person respected by colleagues at his office in Academie de Lyon as well as by teachers from subordinate inclusive schools in Lyon and subordinate districts, in suburban also being served by the Academie de Lyon. The right choice of that particular key informant L. La Roch was in my opinion an important factor associated with the successful implementation of studies, using shadowing techniques. The key, informant, educational consultant Louis La Roch gave me a chance to know him in professional relationships with teachers in schools, colleagues in the office and in the private with family members. I had the opportunity to observe the professional actions of the consultant and I appreciated it especially while participating in entire day with classes he supervised and advised in inclusive unit CLIS for children with disabilities, in primary school Groupe Scolaire de la Gare d'Eau in Lyon.

I asked for the permission to record and publish visual data which I obtained from the consultant and teacher. I could freely for several hours attend classes in CLIS and in addition to *shadowing* also pursue micro-ethnographic research. This was observation of the typical teaching and advising work that consultant conducted by himself, then jointly with the female teacher and then he discussed the problems of working with children the teacher had. My participation in class and shadowing took somewhat passive and stationary nature but I watched both: the teacher and consultant in interactions, their teaching and cooperating with children as well as children's reactions. In the unit CLIS were children of age 10, with mild intellectual disabilities, children with dyslexia and special needs or problems with schoolwork that were diagnosed. The children were not embarrassed that the consultant came in and led a lesson instead of their teacher which became non-participant, sitting back of the classroom.

After some time the teacher also joined the action. I could observe the methods of professional work by consultant but not as an inspector with the power to assess or criticize the

teacher making mistakes. I could take the pictures; shoot without any trouble in the class. I only walked slowly on squatting not to distract children. The lessons run smoothly, the children took an active part in it. They had fun working with consultant they had never seen before. I watched French grammar lessons and mathematics classes and then attended about 30 minutes discussion of all problematic issues after classes with whom the teacher turned to the Academie de Lyon for help by the consultant. Children participating in the lessons which were led spontaneously by the consultant were freely and comfortable with me as an observer because I told them at the beginning, before the lessons that I knew very little French language, certainly a lot less than they know. My statement strongly cheered the children with disabilities or difficulties. They really stopped to notice my presence during classes, what as observer making photos, I very much appreciated. I thought about the fun, children had while working with a consultant, who was not office – man with power from Academie de Lyon but also professional and friendly teacher.

**Advantages, Challenges and Limitations of Shadowing:** Czarniawska<sup>7</sup> writes that shadowing is easier than participant observation because shadowing does not require simultaneous action and observation and because participation in complex, professional activities would be impossible for most researchers. In terms of methodological gains, it permits one to preserve an attitude of outsidership whereas participant observation creates many opportunities for 'going native'. The author continues that "the main advantage of shadowing over stationary observation is, by definition, its mobility. The matter is, however, more complicated than is the sheer act of movement. After all, not even observers whom I call 'stationary' remain immobile in the same place during their study. Shadowing creates a peculiar duo: the person shadowed and the person doing the shadowing. This is where the dynamics of cognition became complex indeed.

Czarniawska<sup>6</sup> writes also that shadowing is indeed the multilateral possibility of observing. Multilateralism is associated with quadruple observation: informant and observer watching each other and each of them is observing the cultural scene and they gave themselves a mutual feedback. The advantage as indicated by the authors is to accompany to key informant in a variety of professional and personal situations.

A limitation of shadowing, as indicated by Czarniawska<sup>6</sup> is associated with gender when the author mentioned her experiences while researches among males, company directors. I would add gender and cultural patterns too which are different according to male-female relationships in Poland and in France. Author continues carefully after Wolcott<sup>19</sup> rather only mentions that the chemistry in male-female relationships also affects the observations, carried out in shadowing which I also slightly have experienced in Lyon research, during my stay and contact with professional



French males in education settings. I think that males I met tried to flirt more than males in Poland in similar accidental situations. Perhaps it is the specialite de Française maison? But also it can slightly deconcentrate the female researcher too. I agree with Czarniawska<sup>6</sup> and other field researchers as Hammersley and Atkinson<sup>10</sup> about the image and role of clothing while shadowing the cultural scene.

This reminds me of such preparations. I also had in May 2012 as a foreign observer blend in France. This required knowledge of the key trends and assumptions clothes of contemporary female from particular social class. I choose mostly black outfit which is worn in France, even since the morning. It happened that my outfit was objectively tested earlier in Lyon, France, in September 2010, when the journalist from surveys tried to engage me in the street in conversation for public media. The journalist took me as the local female and it was a good signal. I melted into the background.

For me, a little less comfortable and difficult to handle was the position of observing the educational consultant in private life. It means I touched deeper into the marriage and family turmoil and recognized after subtle signals the camouflaged marital problems in the family. A certain advantage of shadowing conducted in Lyon, France in 2012 and speaking poor French language was that the actors in the scene observed, this mean the key informant and members of his family (wife, two adult daughters and an adult son) always had a comfortable position for communicating in French with each other, so quick and incomprehensible to me. Such situations not only caused however my discomfort because I perceived this as a natural regulator of intimacy borders and a family life safety buffer, separating me from this what should stay not in public. Participants and key informant themselves regulated my access to their privacy. However as I mentioned, shadowing allowed me to know deeper aspects of what people tried to cover by watching them carefully. Many of tacit contents as phenomena arrived to me, while shadowing after and observing non-verbal language of cultural scene, proved to be an excellent exercise for me as the researcher.

The advantage of shadowing was the possibility of an in-depth insight into the working life and what I did not assume in the beginning of the research also family life of the key informant. I think now, that shadowing allows to discover the main problems and key issues of the current engagement of key informant. As I said my position was mainly a non-participating observer and became sometime flexible fluent to participation levels.

At some point shadowing was problematic emotionally and uncomfortable for me because I have observed the breakdown of the family spouses, their marriage that couple could no longer hide before me. It was difficult to face such deeper knowledge which I could not ignore observing phenomena under the surface. Spouses also noted that their

problem is already noticed. These educated people (geriatrician physician and educational consultant) were in a difficult moment of their marriage, which led for a week shadowing allowed me to notice. From that moment, my position has become even more complicated because the key informant's wife began to be subtly jealous of my shadowing. Concluding I would like to say, that gender plays role but in particular cultural contexts even more, as perhaps in France.

That's what I appreciated during the visit to Lyon and in the performing the research was associated with the selection of a key informant, whom I have chosen in the right way for the realization of such particular element of the entire structure in the inclusive units of the education system for children and youth with disabilities.



**Photo 1: Shadowing in the Old town of Lyon**



**Photo 2: CLIS –discussion with female teacher after classes. Groupe Scolaire de la Gare d'Eau, Lyon**



**Photo 3: ULIS –discussion with female teacher and with male, family with disability assistant. Lycée-Collège Claude-Bernard, Villefranche**

## Results

**Basic Data from shadowing in France:** What surprised me most was the mobility element of the French education system and the role of educational consultant, which professionally participates in the exams of young teachers for the next steps in their careers, makes regular visits and simply professionally helps. I was surprised that his position was completely deprived of administrative power, what I would expect in Poland and our consultants' professional behaviors. The French concept of methodical advisory for young teachers working with children and youth with disabilities struck me as interesting. Educational consultant went every day to the office to the Académie de Lyon on hours 9:00AM where he received daily assignments and plans for the visits in the field in CLIS-es or ULIS-es because of raising educational or other problems of young teachers teaching the youth or children with mild intellectual disabilities.

So I got up in the morning to get to know both the office work and the schools realities, leading shadowing of the consultant. Within hours since about 8:30am – 5:30 pm, the consultant had a break from 12: 00am-2:00pm for lunch and after he usually returned to work in the office. He had also professional meetings with colleagues in the office, his boss or meetings outside the office. Site visits appointed by individual young teachers from schools were held shortly after the visit in the office, and usually by noon.

It intrigued me that the feedbacks of staff from Académie de Lyon were so quick. They neither postponed for later urgent advisory issues nor needed assistance in schools. The meetings in inclusive units were arranged quickly. In the afternoon, a consultant worked usually in the office. Office Académie de Lyon employs a number of differently specialized educational consultants, according to special needs of children and youth. There was employed intellectual disability consultant, as well as speech, hearing, vision, mental illness, chronic illness and neurological problems consultants. Consultants visited regularly different

types of inclusive units in public school as in primary, secondary schools, vocational or boarding schools. Because my French language was at the basic level A1, I performed mainly of observation and English language which the French people, after my observation of three different stays in France (1993 entire the month in August, 2010 about two weeks in September, 2012 one week in May) are reluctant to speak. I found it hard to comprehend all French nuances in communication and initiate the friendly communication levels at office and the Académie de Lyon structures and in the field while educational adviser helped young teachers.

As I mentioned earlier I was accustomed in Poland to the fact that the inspector from the superior office supervising the young teachers work is rather a controller. I was surprised that the young teachers so often make use of competences and qualifications of the consultant L. La Roch without fear of losing their jobs or positions. Shadowing let me also get the knowledge of the private and complicated family life of the consultant. I learned his relationships with wife, adult children, daily activities, leisure routines and French cuisine as well. I could also see how the French professionals react to someone with Slavic background from a post-communist country of Eastern Europe. Funny situation happened in the Académie de Lyon where the consultant introduced and presented me to large faculty colleagues. When it turned out that I do not know French sufficiently to conversation, I noticed grimace as undisguised disapproval. Consultant immediately asked such a colleague politely: perhaps you know Polish language? The answer was no. The situation was somewhat comical when someone noticed that analogously it was not my duty to speak French.

The office staff of Académie de Lyon was polite, overcoming reluctance, hesitations and spoke to me in English. When I openly praised them, they dared to even more. Data collection in France in English only at the beginning caused me dilemmas. But what gave me the shadowing carried out as following the step by step after educational consultant in Lyon? Thanks morning visits to the office and afternoon in the schools I could to ask for the execution of detailed maps of daily tasks and explanations of any of the structural elements of the inclusive educational system in France. Undoubtedly the most striking was the role of the consultant and his mobile and flexible professional position.

**Additional Data in shadowing in France:** Although first impressions from observation allowed to see the image of the loving marriage couple, with years of warm experiences and their four talented and educated children, a week's stay and many hours of joint meetings revealed serious problems in marriage of the key informant that the spouses in accordance covered-up in front of me. Family life of consultant was founded upon a concern for the teenager, the youngest daughter and appropriate directing her to boarding school. Consultant and his family had no financial problems



but bills for phones that were shown before eye of the adult children were of a few hundred Euros. Evenings at home were always with excellent dinners shared with Indian and French dishes because the family of the key informant had a great sentiment to culture of India. Once I was also invited to a tasty dinner by general manager, who was promoted in Lyon structure of the education department. The talks were held mostly in French. I was therefore a passive listener and non-participant observer.

It turned out that I was not introduced as I was in 2012 Assistant Professor from the Polish university but only just as a guest. The general manager was very surprised when I introduced myself professionally. She thought that I would be a new housekeeper from Eastern Europe which she suggested to me between the lines. Then she was very surprised that I will go back to Poland again. So I explained that I am an employee of the Polish university and came in Lyon to gather data for scientific work of inclusive educational system. Such French prejudices I recognized. Meeting with this female general manager of educational system made me think that cultural background matters in foreign led researches.

If you are from Eastern Europe and collect data in developed countries it is big chance to be considered as illegal emigrant or person taking employment position of the researched country. On the other hand without taking a part in French conversation in French language I was perceived as less educated. What I noticed in all my stays in France, language is the cultural artifact very seriously considered but the same time French people have problems with proper English language pronunciation and this is some barrier for them to speak in more free way.

## Conclusion

Shadowing as technique and strategy of collecting the data and conducting field research allows for the collection of visual, verbal and other important documents. Even the observations taken for one week can be successful. One week of participation allows the researcher to collect the knowledge he/she intended to collect but also gives more insight under the surface of the problems. That's why I decided to code the personal data and image of the key informant. Shadowing raises ethical concerns and gives opportunities, challenges and limitations of such way of researching. Shadowing undertaken in foreign language culture differing from of the origin culture of the researcher has its difficulties and advantages. Even with relatively poor knowledge of native language but with other languages the researcher can collect valuable data. He/she will be more concentrated on visual phenomena given in the field research. He/she is more attentive to decoding meanings of situations, simple gestures, facial expressions, pantomimic not only for decoding speech.

Shadowing is also writing field notes as well as requests for Methods and Tools, Warsaw, PWN, 2, 41-67 (2012)

clarification of the learned nuances in response to the main research question. This is the moment when shadowing is flexible connected with participant observation. During my research in Lyon, I conducted informal discussions and interviews also about the structure of the French system of inclusive or other forms of education of children and youth with intellectual disabilities. In one interview the son of the key informant also participated as home tutor in the Arab district. His comments also gave some deeper understanding to the differences between Polish and French educational system structures.

The difficulties and limitations during the shadowing I would indicate as ethical dilemmas, gender, cultural background, age, personal attractiveness. Besides the researcher by his/her presence can create tension in existing social systems such as office circles and family. Difficulties encountered in the field, I would also associate with the discomfort of the implementation of shadowing and possibility to get the quick insight under surface the real professional and private life problems of the key informant. In my opinion the investigator has no control over precisely the area as cultural scene of non-participant observation and challenges the field introduced to the investigator. Researcher feels not comfortable when he/she discovers some phenomena that all participants of the field are very busy trying to hide. It is difficult to control the situation when the members scenes (family members) note that "the researcher already knows" what's really going on. Then the curtain slightly falls as well as the rapport in the field.

However, one should know that shadowing is an observation in motion and the following its reality proposed by key informant. Following someone making his/her own decision and four-dimensional observations, led researcher in the areas suggested by a key informant and his/her perspective of seeing and conceptualizing reality. In this sense, cultural knowledge from shadowing technique seems a bit narrow, more valuable if enriched by other observational or verbal techniques of the data collection. The technique would be successfully used in the areas of research on disability areas, giving greater insight into the daily lives of adults with disabilities. During the researches I had a feeling of some deficiency in the collected data but even one week shadowing can give basic patterns to understand the professional and private life of person being followed and studied and to fuel further research curiosity.

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